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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [TH](#)
SUBJECT: THAI ROUND-UP JUNE 11: DEMOS AND DOLLARS

Classified By: Political Counselor Susan M. Sutton, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: The Assets Examination Commission announced on June 11 that it would freeze the assets of former Prime Minister Thaksin, based on accusations of corruption and misconduct. Pro-Thaksin demonstrators marched Saturday on the Army Headquarters; a prominent anti-Thaksin activist was the target of jibes and thrown bottles from the crowd. The PTV demo at Sanam Luang had about 25,000 people on Sunday. Several thousand monks demonstrated to make Buddhism the state religion. None of these demonstrations, in themselves, appear large enough to have much impact, but the cumulative effect will make the authorities nervous. END SUMMARY.

AEC FREEZES THAKSIN ASSETS

12. (C) The Assets Examination Commission (AEC) late today announced a freeze on former PM Thaksin's assets. The AEC has the authority to freeze the assets of anyone if there are reasonable grounds to believe that he has been involved in corruption or misconduct, according to the Council on National Security (CNS) decree 30. The AEC listed five charges of misconduct/corruption, including the CTX case and alleged fraud connected to the proceeds of the 3-digit lottery. The order is effective immediately; Thaksin can appeal.

13. (C) The AEC has been criticized by many of the anti-Thaksin forces for not moving sooner to freeze the ex-PM's assets. The decision to do so now may be partly rooted in the concerns that Thaksin is paying the bill for the anti-government protests and is suspected of funding former TRT politicians' efforts to form pro-Thaksin proxy parties. On the other hand, after six months of investigation, it may have been time for the AEC to either admit it couldn't find any evidence of corruption (and be hooted out of town) or lay out its case, and give Thaksin a chance to respond to it.

PTV DEMONSTRATORS MARCH AND THROW THINGS

14. (C) The pro-Thaksin rally at Sanam Luang made the news late Saturday when an estimated 10,000 protesters marched on the Army Headquarters. The group demonstrated at the HQ until after midnight, according to press reports. Prominent anti-Thaksin activist, former Senator Kraisaak Choonhaven, went to observe the protest and had to be rescued by police. He was identified by someone in the crowd, and suffered minor injuries, apparently from being struck by bottles thrown at him by protesters. The crowd subsequently dispersed, with no other reports of injuries or arrests.

15. (C) The demonstration continued on Sunday evening. Although PTV is still the organizer, the group seems to make little reference to its original cause d'etre, to be allowed to set up its cable TV station. The stage backdrop says, "Democracy" and the speakers say, "CNS - get out" and laud Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai party. (We spotted a "We miss Thaksin" bumper sticker.) The crowd was significantly larger than the earlier PTV demos -- by our rough estimate, at least 25,000 participants. The group seemed on average younger and less middle-class than the anti-Thaksin rallies of last year. There was clearly a hard core of followers, who shouted and waved "CNS- get out" banners. On the other hand, a number of the participants sat far back in the field, removed from the crowd, and talked among themselves with seemingly little interest in the goings on. The contention that at least some of the participants are paid to join the crowd may be true, but many of the protesters appear sincere and motivated. Although the demonstrations are not large, they are persistent enough to make the CNS nervous, particularly if they leave the controllable confines of Sanam Luang.

BUDDHIST MONKS PROTEST

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16. (C) The Constitution Drafting Assembly (CDA) was also the site of a small protest by several thousand Buddhist monks, calling for Buddhism to be made the state religion in the new constitution. (Press estimates say 5,000, but traffic police for the area say it was only about half that number.) About ten monks are fasting near the CDA site as well. Last month, supporters of the state religion proposal had threatened to bring out tens of thousands of monks and lay people in support of its demands. While any demonstration by monks gets attention, they do not seem to be turning out large enough numbers to intimidate the CDA.

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